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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 03 BRASILIA 000035

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TAGS: [KCRM](#) [KJUS](#) [PGOV](#) [BR](#)

SUBJECT: BRAZIL: LESS GUNS, MORE BUTTER: LULA TAKES ON CRIME (PART 1 OF 3)

REF: A. A. BRASILIA 000761

[1B](#). B. SAO PAULO 000873

[1C](#). C. RECIFE 000087

Classified By: DEPUTY CHIEF OF MISSION PHIL CHICOLA FOR REASONS 1.4 B A ND D

[¶1.](#) (C) Summary: After much hesitation, President Lula was finally forced to wade into the public security debate in light of consistent polling that places crime as the number one concern of most Brazilians. The result, a public security plan called the National Program on Public Security with Citizenship (PRONASCI), was unveiled earlier this year and received Congressional sanction in October. The program was developed under the premise that the crime problem in Brazil is too big and complex to be solved by simply putting more bullets, guns, and boots on the ground. The program seeks to address the social causes of crime as well--a stance that has earned the Lula government scorn and charges of being soft on crime. Although the Lula government deserves praise for finally proposing a national public security plan, the unorthodox nature of some of the initiatives together with the program's complexity and limited territorial reach reduce the chances that this particular government will succeed in putting a sufficient dent in the crime problem to take the public security issue off the table as a major issue for the 2010 presidential elections.

[¶2.](#) (U) This cable is one in a series by Mission Brazil on crime issues at both the national and regional levels (reflets). Septels will address PRONASCI's approach to law enforcement reform and the potential role of the military in solving Brazil's growing public security concerns.

Crime No Longer Just a State Issue

[¶3.](#) (C) Since the fall of the military government 20 years ago, the Brazilian constitution has assigned responsibility for public security to the states. According to Ricardo Balestreri, Director of Research for the Ministry of Justice's National Secretariat for Public Security (SENASP) this began to change in 2000 when President Fernando Henrique Cardoso proposed the nation's first public security plan. In Balestreri's view, since Cardoso's plan, public security has

become an issue in which the federal government increasingly is expected to be a co-protagonist. However, Federal Deputy Raul Jungmann (PPS, Socialist People's Party, opposition; of Pernambuco), who serves as Vice-Chairman of the Chamber of Deputies' Committee on Public Security and Organized Crime, told poloff that it is still far from being primarily a federal issue. Crime remains a topic that many federal politicians-- in particular leftist ones such as himself--would prefer to avoid both for political reasons (fear of being held accountable for astronomical national crime rates) and because of historical sensitivities (use of the military and police as tools of repression during the military era).

¶4. (U) Public opinion polls, however, have consistently shown that the general public is fed up with the crime situation in Brazil and are demanding a get-tough approach against criminal activity. The most recent poll to confirm this, carried in the November 28, 2007 of Brazil's premier news magazine "Veja," showed that 61% approved of the harsh methods used against suspected criminals in the popular film, "Tropa da Elite." The same poll showed the public is clamoring for the active involvement of the federal government, with 88% of those polled approving of the military taking an active role in combating crime. Although some observers believe public concern on crime in the past has not translated into an election issue at the national level (see Ref A), political parties may be reassessing this view--one political analyst here told poloffs that he has talked with two political parties about developing political messages, heading towards the 2008 local and 2010 presidential elections, on crime and public security that avoid appearing too militaristic or too soft.

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Lula Enters the Fray with PRONASCI

¶5. (C) Alexandre Sankiewicz, Legislative Consultant on Criminal Justice issues for the Brazilian Chamber of Deputies, told poloff that, in the past, only spectacular criminal incidents prompted the federal government to address public security issues. The response usually took the form of a flurry of punitive but short-lived military-style operations and calls for changes to the penal code (e.g., increasing criminal penalties, lowering the criminal age of majority for heinous crimes to 16), which tended to have either little long-term impact or not to be approved once public pressure subsided. Breaking with that pattern, as a result of the intense public pressure stemming from episodes such as the horrific killing of a 6 year old boy on the streets of Rio de Janeiro (Ref A), the Lula government devised what his government proclaimed is the first national public security plan to ever deal with crime in a comprehensive fashion. The plan, PRONASCI, breaks with most previous approaches at the national level by attempting to tackle crime both by addressing the needs of the law enforcement community and by targeting what the government views as the underlying social causes of crime--mainly hunger, poverty, lack of social inclusion, and failure of the state to maintain a presence in entire areas of the major cities.

¶6. (U) Also referred to as the PAC da Segurança (or Security PAC, so called after the Accelerated Growth Program, the government's infrastructure investment program), PRONASCI will invest 6.7 billion Reais (about USD 3.94 billion) through 2012 and consists of 94 programs run by the Ministry of Justice as well as 15 other ministries (including the Ministries of Planning, Health, Science and Technology, Labor and Employment, Culture, Sports, and Cities). The government will implement the program in the 11 cities with the highest crime-rates: Rio de Janeiro, Sao Paulo, Porto Alegre, Belo Horizonte, Brasilia, Curitiba, Belem, Recife, Maceio,

Salvador, and Vitoria, focusing on three core areas: enhancing education and technical training for law enforcement professionals, investing in and improving the prison system, and targeting the socio-cultural factors that lead to crime.

Dealing with the Roots of Crime

¶7. (U) For many within the governing coalition, the real importance of PRONASCI lies in its attempt address for the first time what they call the social causes of crime. Federal Deputy Carlos Eduardo Vieira da Cunha (PDT, Democratic Workers Party, governing coalition; of Rio Grande do Sul), a member of the Chamber of Deputies' Committee on Public Security and Organized Crime, told poloff that the emphasis on social programs was necessary in order to overcome the tendency of the population to support harsh police measures instead of addressing the roots of crime. Inspired by the success of "Bolsa Familia" (the government's popular cash assistance program), the government plans to establish under PRONASCI three types of "bolsas", ranging from R\$100 to R\$190 a month: "Projeto Reservista-Cidadao" (Citizen-Reservist), for members of the armed forces to do community work after completing their obligatory service; "Projeto de Protecao dos Jovens em Territorio Vulneravel" (Protection of Youth in Vulnerable Areas), for youth in danger of entering a life of crime; and "Projeto Maes da Paz" (Mothers of Peace) for mothers in poor and crime-ridden communities to serve as community leaders and provide guidance to at-risk youths.

¶8. (U) PRONASCI would also provide funding for a variety of initiatives designed to address a range of disparate social ills from the prevalence of domestic violence to lack of access to cultural and sporting facilities for at risk youth.

It would strengthen the Maria da Penha Law by creating 53

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domestic violence centers dedicated to rehabilitating aggressors under the law, establishing domestic violence courts, and specialized legal assistance units for victims of domestic violence. The program would also create 20 centers that would train and develop community leaders specialized in conflict resolution in vulnerable communities and will establish 132 Community Councils on Public Security to ensure community dialogue and accountability with the police.

Proposal Exposes Government to Criticism Over Competence, Ideology

¶9. (SBU) Most analysts and officials with which Post spoke offered praise for the concept behind PRONASCI, while expressing skepticism at its chances for success. Federal Deputy Marcelo Melo (PMDB, Democratic Movement Party, government coalition; of Goias), PRONASCI rapporteur in the Chamber of Deputies, admitted to poloff that the Lula administration lacked the competence to administer and execute the program. Furthermore, a chorus of opposition members has called PRONASCI nothing more than an effort to foster "clientelism" among the poor. As Federal Deputy Jugmann stated, "the PT does not have a program for governance but one for power" supported by handing out cash payments to every niche group. As a result of this perception, opposition members succeeded in stripping the three new "bolsa" programs from the version of PRONASCI that became law. The government has re-submitted the three programs to Congress and Minister of Justice Tarso Genro is pressing for their approval, calling them an essential component of PRONASCI.

Comment:

¶10. (C) Lula's effort to address Brazil's growing crime and public security problem in a comprehensive fashion has raised government efforts to a new level. PRONASCI will provide a significant test for his signature approach to Brazil's social ills. The government does not appear to have the institutional capacity to implement such a broad program that requires coordination among more than a dozen federal ministries and agencies, in addition to dozens of state and local government agencies. Even if effectively implemented, the proposed programs and policies may not be the right mix to put a dent in crime levels, particularly in the short term. Finally, public impatience with the worsening situation and the additional cost on top of Lula's already extensive social support programs may undermine the sustained implementation required for PRONASCI's key social elements.

The general public is clamoring for immediate solutions and a show of strength from government at all levels, rather than the socially-oriented, long-term solutions offered through PRONASCI. This disconnect will continue to leave the door open for the opposition to hammer the government on its weak public security credentials when the next horrific criminal incident inevitably takes place. And it almost guarantees that public security issues will be among the top voter concerns heading into next year's local and 2010's general elections.

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